

PATENT
IBM Docket No. GB9-2000-0032

REMARKS

Status

Claims 1-7 and 14-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the teaching of US Patent No. 6,434,605 (hereinafter "Faulkner") in view of the teaching of US Patent No. 6,434,086 (Martin). Claims 8-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the teaching of Faulkner in view of the teaching of US Patent No. 6,353,838 (hereinafter "Wong").

The subject matter of the claims was commonly owned at the time inventions covered by the claims were made, as the Examiner has presumed in preparing the Office Action.

Analysis

First looking to the teaching of Faulkner, it appears that the focus is on detecting problems with sending messages over a channel and automatically correcting certain connection problems (see e.g. Faulkner's "Summary of the Invention" at col. 3, line 15 to col. 4, line 4). Specified problems are channel failures, initiator/listener failures and message sequence errors, which are problems that are potentially overcome by restart or reordering, operations suited to a software logic intervention.

When these problems are detected, action is taken attempting to correct the problem without user intervention. This teaching, it appears, does not directly relate to sharing or processing of units of work descriptions; but, rather, relates to fixing certain software-fixable channel problems automatically. Messages are discussed but not unit of work descriptions. Where is there a discussion of storing units of work descriptions at col. 1, lines 33-51, much less, a sharing of same by a group of resource managers?

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Martin, on the other hand, teaches involvement with units of work which are being processed. Recovery tokens are provided (see Fig. 29) to establish points in time for back out of changes if a problem occurs. Sub-units of work are created from the units of work (Fig. 29). As a unit of work is processed the sub- units are committed. If a problem arises and a ROLS call occurs the sub-unit is discarded but the prior committed sub-units are saved.

This approach saves pieces of a unit of work that are successfully completed in situations where a problem arises during the processing of a unit of work. At Fig. 29 of Martin, step 846, a table of sub-units of work is created; but, there is no indication that it is shared and processed by resource managers of a group, let alone by managers notified of a connection failure of another member of the group.

Message queues taught by Wong include a message and its state in a single file (see Fig. 3). The files are written in segments and each segment has a Queue Entry Map Table to facilitate locating a desired file. Wong's data arrangement is intended to conveniently locate a defective record and have, sequentially available, the data to return it to its prior state.

Applicant has recognized that by identifying resource managers to groups, which share storage areas for messages and unit of work descriptions respectively, the group members may take over a unit of work when another group member encounters a problem. This does not solve the problem itself; but, rather, resolves the resulting interrupted processing work. While Faulkner's teaching may fix some types of connection problems swiftly and automatically, many problems affecting work processing, such as corruption of a resource manager program or a channel failure requiring maintenance action beyond a restart, are not readily resolvable. And, many

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systems, as Faulkner mentions in background, lack automatic recovery for even the limited subset of problems where it is applicable.

Applicant shifts the unit of work to one or more other managers of the identified group that shares the storage areas. This is not saving sub-units of completed work as taught by Martin. It is not storing messages and states together in a special way as taught by Wong. It involves identifying a group of managers which share two data storage structures of a resource, one of which receives the units of work descriptors from the identified managers. There is notification to the group of a connection failure and responsive accessing of the descriptors by one or more other members of the group to recover the unresolved units of work.

Applicant's approach of storing units of work in a common storage by an identified group of managers is emphasized in independent claims 1, 15, 19 and 20, as is accessing and recovering, responsive to notice of a manager connection problem by the other managers.

The applied references teach different approaches for solving different problems. Again, Faulkner merely seeks to fix the connection that is broken and Martin seeks to save sub-units of work that can be committed. Wong creates a data architecture that is log based and facilitates repair. What suggests a grouping of data managers that have a common storage for placing work descriptors - data managers that respond to a problem notice for a manager with a connection problem and assume the work of the identified manager by accessing descriptors in the common storage?

In accordance with the foregoing discussion, it is submitted that, the constructions applied to Applicant's claims, are derived by combining teachings intended for significantly different corrective actions than Applicant's, and are not suggested or

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supported by the applied art. Indeed, the primary reference, Faulkner, does not appear to even mention units of work descriptors or their storage, a significant focus of Applicant's answer to connection problems that is highlighted in all of the claims. Martin stores unit of work descriptors but does not teach common access by a manager group, much less, access by other managers responsive to notification that one manager has a connection problem. Hence, it is respectfully requested that these rejections be withdrawn and that the claims be allowed to pass to issue. Early notice to this effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,


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